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The Elder John, Papias, Irenæus, Eusebius and the Syriac Translator

B. W. BACON

YALE UNIVERSITY

THE famous fragment of Papias which contains practically all we know of the beginnings of gospel composition, and forms our strongest link of connection with the Apostles, is quoted by Eusebius in an endeavor to correct what has been designated from its principal promulgator the "Irenæan tradition" of Apostles in Asia. Eusebius did not criticise this in its whole extent, but simply in so far as it rested on the statements of Papias.¹ Shortly before² the period of Irenæus' work (written *ca.* 186 A.D.) the Roman presbyter Gaius in debate with the Montanist Proclus, had repudiated the latter's authorities, the Johannine writings, as unauthentic.³ Irenæus (followed later by his disciple Hippolytus, whose *Heads against Gaius* are still extant in abstract⁴) became their stalwart champion, espe-

¹ The section begins: "Irenæus makes mention of these (the five books of *Exegesis*) as the only works written by him (Papias)." It proceeds to cite and criticise his description of Papias' relation to the Apostles and to Polycarp, as below, p. 15.

² Eusebius dates Gaius under Zephyrinus (*HE*, II. xxv. 6), probably too late.

³ The *Dialogue* aimed to "curb the rashness and boldness of his opponents in setting forth new Scriptures." It maintained the authority of "Peter and Paul" (attributing thirteen letters to the latter) against that of the writings attributed to "a great apostle" at Ephesus (*HE*, II. xxv. 7, VI. xx. 3, III. xxviii. 2). Polycrates (*HE*, III. xxxi. 3) inverts the argument.

⁴ See J. R. Harris, *Hermas in Arcadia and Other Essays*, 1896.

cially defending the Fourth Gospel. For this task his early residence in Asia and direct eye and ear knowledge of Polycarp, a survivor of the apostolic age, gave him an advantage of which he makes the utmost. He depends, however, for all his specific citations of apostolic tradition upon a written source, now generally admitted to have been the work of Papias, entitled *Κυριακῶν λογίων ἐξηγήσεις*. In the passage wherein his principal quotation is made he designates the worthy bishop of Hierapolis as "a man of the earliest period, a hearer of John and companion of Polycarp."⁵ Eusebius one hundred and forty years later, having the work of Papias before him, and examining it carefully for the specific purpose of determining this particular point, had no difficulty in showing by citation of the passages bearing upon the question that Irenæus had misinterpreted them, attributing to Papias a much closer connection with the apostolic fountain head of tradition than could be justly claimed.

On the other hand, if Irenæus was misled by his zeal to establish the unbroken continuity in proconsular Asia of that apostolic tradition whereof he counted himself a providential representative, Eusebius in his turn cannot be altogether acquitted of similar partiality. He also had read the *Dialogue of Proclus and Gaius*, and on all but one point was as ardently opposed as Irenæus himself to its anti-Johannine criticism. The Roman followers of Gaius, one of whose favorite arguments was to point to the disagreement of the Fourth Gospel with the other three, were to Eusebius as obnoxious as to Hippolytus and to the author of the *Muratorianum*. He regarded them as "senseless" Alogi, to quote the punning epithet of Epiphanius,⁶ men who for the sake of ridding themselves of the excesses of the "Phrygian heresy" had "emptied out the baby with the bath" by rejecting the whole Phrygo-Asiatic canon — Gospel, Epistles,⁷ and Apoca-

⁵ ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ, Ἰωάννου ἀκουστής, Πολυκάρπου δὲ ἑταῖρος.

⁶ Epiphanius in this portion of his *Refutation of All Heresies* merely reflects Hippolytus, the disciple of Irenæus, whose *Heads against Gaius* give us the substance of his refutation of the presbyter.

⁷ The rejection of the *Epistles* seems to be only the inference of Epipha-

lypse of John together. On one point of their contention, however, Eusebius was disposed to yield, though the arguments which had convinced him were not, or at least not directly, those of Gaius. Eusebius had been profoundly influenced by the reasoning of another great *malleus hereticorum*, Dionysius of Alexandria, whose opponents the Chiliasts based their millenarian doctrines, not like the Phrygian champions of the prophetic Spirit on the Johannine canon as a whole, but simply on the Apocalypse. Dionysius cut the ground from under their feet by denying its apostolicity, though he maintained as cordially as ever the authenticity of the Gospel and at least of the first of the Epistles. Henceforth Revelation, the writing which alone of the five made direct claim to Johannine authorship, with direct and explicit attestation by both Papias and Justin Martyr, became the "disputed," and the other four, or at least the Gospel and First Epistle, the "undisputed" Johannine writings. Eusebius quotes at length the argument of Dionysius against the Apocalypse, wherein the Alexandrian scholar displays the skill in literary criticism one might anticipate in a pupil of Origen, showing how completely Revelation differs in style and standpoint from the Gospel and Epistles. Eusebius himself was anything but favorably disposed toward the Chiliasts. He even attributes the crude eschatology he found represented by Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and other members of the Ephesian school, to the influence of Papias, whom for this very unfair reason he contemptuously sets down as "a very narrow-minded man."⁸ We are not surprised, therefore, to find him not only quoting the theory of Dionysius with approval, but in his famous list of "admitted," "disputed," and "spurious" books making special exception of Revelation, which *if* by the Apostle must of course be admitted as canonical; but otherwise cannot even

nus, but it was doubtless correct. The work of Hippolytus in the list of his writings on the back of the statue in the Lateran Museum is called only a *Defense of the Gospel and Apocalypse of John*. The Epistles were perhaps not involved in the dispute.

⁸ σφόδρα σμικρὸν τὸν νοῦν.

be classed with the "disputed" books (*ἀντιλεγόμενα*) which included 2 and 3 John, but must take its place with the "spurious" (*νόθα*).⁹ To impute partiality to Eusebius without convincing evidence would be a hazardous proceeding; but on this particular matter of the Apocalypse of John the evidence is convincing, for, Blass to the contrary notwithstanding, Papias certainly did make repeated and copious use of this book, besides attesting its "credibility" (*ἀξιόπιστος*). We have the full and explicit testimony of Andreas of Cæsarea, supported by Anastasius of Sinai, and Victorinus, to say nothing of Eusebius' own statements regarding the infection of millenarianism which spread from Papias through Justin to Irenæus. Over and above all we have Irenæus' testimonies concerning the currency of Revelation among "the persons who had seen John with their eyes."¹⁰ To deny weight to all this is to discredit oneself, not the testimony. Yet Eusebius, who had promised to give his readers the evidence he found in early writers of their use of books whose canonicity was in dispute, maintains complete silence regarding Papias' use of Revelation, while he mentions his "testimonies" taken from 1 Peter and 1 John. Silence under such conditions—silence so marked as to lead not only Blass but even Hilgenfeld actually to deny Papias' acquaintance with Revelation *in toto*—cannot be called impartial.

Clearly Zahn is right in maintaining that no scientific judgment can be passed upon Eusebius' correction of Irenæus' inferences from Papias, which does not give due consideration to his strong bias in favor of Dionysius' theory of Revelation as the work of "another John in Asia." In

⁹ Stanton (*Gospels as Hist. Documents*, p. 240), who thinks that if the *Dialogue against Proclus* had rejected the Fourth Gospel, "Eusebius could not have ignored so serious a departure," fails to perceive that Eusebius introduces his answer to Galus in III. xxiii. xxiv. Very shortly before (c. xviii) he speaks his mind on the origin of "the so-called Apocalypse of John." That he should lend weight to the objections "that the Gospels are at variance with one another" by naming as their author the "very learned ecclesiastic" Galus was not to be expected.

¹⁰ Iren. V. xxx. 1.

fact, he makes direct reference to Dionysius' suggestion in citing the passage (τῶν δύο . . . εἰρηκότων).

Now the weak point of Dionysius' theory had been his inability to point to any "other John in Asia" than the Apostle, for he does not himself rely upon the alleged "two *μνῆματα* in Ephesus each bearing the name of John," but prefers to identify the John of Revelation with John Mark of Acts. It is here that Eusebius comes in with his great discovery. He has found, he thinks, the desired evidence in the Papias fragment. Papias does indeed refer to another John besides the Apostle, for, as Eusebius says, "he mentions him after an interval, and places him among others outside the number of the Apostles, placing Aristion before him, and distinctly calls him an Elder." On this Elder John of Papias Eusebius therefore eagerly seizes, as evidence "that it was the second (the Elder), if one will not admit that it was the first (the Apostle), who saw the Revelation, which is ascribed by name to John." He has the candor to admit, however, that Papias did not really state that he had been "himself a hearer of Aristion and the Elder John," but only "mentioned them frequently by name and gave their traditions in his writings." We see, then, that while Eusebius is anxious to correct Irenæus *in so far as the correction would militate against Revelation*, he is as anxious as any other orthodox father not to undermine the support of the rest of the Johannine canon by weakening those links of tradition which Irenæus had boasted of as connecting himself with the Apostle, for it is certainly Papias that Irenæus has in mind when he alleges that some of the Asiatic elders "saw not only John (as Polycarp had) but other Apostles also, and heard these things (the tradition of Jesus' age) from them, and testify to the statement."¹¹ The present "testify" (*testantur*) shows that he is quoting a written authority, which can be no other than Papias.

It is important to observe this distinction in Eusebius' prejudices in weighing Zahn's endeavor to discredit his

¹¹ *Her.* II. xxii. 5, Euseb. *HE*, III. xxiii. 3.

statements. He was, we must admit, quite perceptibly anxious to deprive Revelation of its claim to apostolicity. *As regards all other elements of the Irenæan tradition he was doubly zealous to support it.* His eagerness to find "another John in Asia" does indeed require a discount on this feature of his testimony. In fact, the concessive *γούν* ("at all events he [Papias] mentions them frequently by name, and gives their traditions in his writings") is nothing less than an admission that his imputation of a personal relation between Papias and this "Elder John" had no support in the text. As we shall see, an eye not prejudiced like that of Irenæus, and that of Eusebius in no less degree, to support the apostolic succession of Asia would have drawn quite other inferences. Dionysius, for example, can hardly have been ignorant of this Elder John. So renowned a scholar can scarcely be supposed to have left unnoticed the famous work of Papias in his controversy with the Chiliasts. But Dionysius found nothing in Papias to connect "the Elder John" with Asia. In this "discovery" therefore Eusebius could claim complete originality. Contrariwise as respects all other points of the Irenæan tradition. From these Eusebius had cogent reason for subtracting as little as possible, for in his own earlier work¹² he had committed himself to all the exaggerations of Irenæus, ranking Papias in the generation along with Polycarp, and even calling him in Irenæus' own words "a hearer of John the Apostle." Thus the stronger Zahn's case becomes against the impartiality of Eusebius, the stronger grows the probability that Papias knew of no John in Asia at all, save what he read in Rev. 14. 9.

Effort has been made by Zahn,¹³ and especially by Gutjahr,¹⁴ to turn to account the new evidence afforded by the Syriac version of Eusebius in the interest of this same heightening of the rank of Papias and vindication of Irenæus' pretensions on his behalf. We shall endeavor to show

¹² *Chronicon* for Olymp. 220, ed. A. Schoene (1866), II. p. 162.

¹³ *Forschungen*, VI. i. *Apostel und Apostelschüler in der Provinz Asien*, 1900.

¹⁴ *Glaubwürdigkeit des Irenäischen Zeugnisses*, 1904.

on the contrary that the peculiarities of this extremely ancient translation furnish evidence only on the opposite side. They are striking enough and eminently consistent, for all tend to the very object the Protestant champion of reactionary views and his Roman Catholic ally have so much at heart. The one great drawback is that they prove altogether too much, evidencing not so much what *Eusebius* wished to say, as what the *translator*, whom we may designate S, desired to make him say; for S's loyalty to his author was not equal to his loyalty to current orthodoxy. In short, he takes sides against his own text for a still more stringent interpretation of the long-established Irenæan tradition. Not unnaturally he makes the same kind of nonsense we find in Biblical versions such as the LXX and Targums, whose authors felt it necessary to be more orthodox than the Scriptural writers they professed to translate. As manifesting this *Tendenz* even the blunders and arbitrary changes of S have value. The tenacity of the Irenæan tradition, in the teeth of positive disproof will teach us two things: (1) A juster valuation of Eusebius' opposition to it. We shall realize both how impossible it is that Eusebius should have made resistance on a point so vital to the church, even retracting his own earlier statements, without a careful and systematic review of the admitted sole source of information on the subject;¹⁵ and also how impossible that having made it, his representations should have gone uncontradicted if Papias' treatise, in general circulation as it was for centuries after, had really been misrepresented.

(2) We shall also better realize from it how much more serious was the temptation to Eusebius to understate his correction than to overstate it. As we have seen, his *Chronology*, a substructure of his *History*, had embodied at full face-value Irenæus' erroneous placing of Papias, a vital link

¹⁵ It was essential to Eusebius' argument to show that Irenæus had no ulterior source of information, but based his statements on the passages adduced. Hence *ὡς μόνων γραφέντων*. Irenæus' exclusive dependence on the written work for his knowledge of Papias is proved (against Gutjahr) not merely by his gross misdating of the man, but by his description of the source of his information *ἐστὶ γὰρ κτλ.*

in that succession of "Apostles and disciples of Apostles in Asia" so indispensable to all defenders of the Ephesian canon. We must therefore by no means minimize, but rather take at their *maximum* value, Eusebius' admissions that in the authority on which so much of his case rested there was no claim of direct relation even to the Elder John. Eusebius had made thorough search of the work of Papias, — the only source of evidence known either to Irenæus or himself, — and is obliged to admit that even the lower ranking which he tries to give its author finds no support in the book. The Papias passages themselves, — the most favorable Eusebius was able to find, — interpreted in their own context, place their author, as we shall see, not at the second, but at the *third* remove from apostolic authority. Papias was not a hearer even of the "disciples of the Apostles" *γνώριμοι τῶν ἀποστόλων*. Why then does Eusebius halt half-way in his correction of the error of Irenæus? Our study of his interest in current questions of canonicity leaves the motive transparent. To admit that Papias had not even been a hearer of the *second* John would conflict with *both* of Eusebius' cherished ideas. He would then be sacrificing both the authenticity of the Gospel *and* the unauthenticity of the Apocalypse as well. Such an interpretation would have been almost as obnoxious to him as to Zahn and Gutjahr. And yet this *third*-hand relation of Papias to the Apostles is what naturally follows from Eusebius' admissions. It is in fact, as we shall see, the only interpretation which can give a consistent meaning to the citation, or enable us to understand *πρεσβύτερος* in the sense always attached to it in the period in question. But let us turn now to S.

The Syriac version of Eusebius' *History*, edited in France by Bedjan in 1897, and by Wright and McLean in 1898 in England, is of extreme antiquity. It is known in a Petersburg manuscript of 462 A.D., a London manuscript of the sixth century, and from a subsidiary Armenian version (colated by Merx in Wright and McLean's edition) made before 441 A.D.; so that there is some ground even for the

claim of those who think the translator may have been a contemporary of Eusebius himself. For our purpose it is sufficient to place in one column the accepted Greek text, with collation of the Ms variants, the more or less arbitrary Latin renderings of Rufinus and Jerome, and the excerpts of Nicephorus, while we set in a parallel column an English rendering of Nestle's translation of the Syriac carefully compared with the original.¹⁶ Italics are used to call attention to the variations of the Syriac from the Greek text, [] for its omissions.

THE PAPIAS FRAGMENT

GREEK EUSEBIUS

Οὐκ ὀκνήσω δέ σοι καὶ ὅσα
ποτὲ παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων κα-
λῶς ἔμαθον καὶ καλῶς ἐμνημό-
νευσα συγκατατάξαι^α ταῖς ἐρμη-
10 νείαις διαβεβαιούμενος ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν
ἀλήθειαν. οὐ γὰρ τοῖς τὰ πολλὰ
λέγουσιν ἔχαιρον ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοὶ,
ἀλλὰ τοῖς τάληθῇ διδάσκουσιν,
οὐδὲ τοῖς ἀλλοτρίας ἐντολὰς μνη-
10 μονεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς τὰς παρὰ
τοῦ κυρίου τῇ πίστει δεδομένας^β
καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς παραγινομένοις^γ τῆς
ἀληθείας. Εἰ δέ που καὶ παρηκο-
λουθηκῶς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις^δ
15 ἔλθοι, τοὺς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέ-
κρινον^ε λόγους, τί Ἀνδρέας ἢ τί
Πέτρος εἶπεν ἢ τί Φίλιππος ἢ
τί Θωμᾶς ἢ Ἰάκωβος^ς ἢ τί Ἰωάν-

SYRIAC VERSION

I do not scruple to adduce
for thee in these interpreta-
tions of mine that also which
I well learned []^a from the
Elders and well remember.
And I attest on behalf of
these *men*^b the truth. For I
did not take delight in those
who have much to say, as
many do, but in those who
teach the truth; neither in
those who recall command-
ments of strangers, but in
those who transmit what was
given by our Lord to the faith,
and is derived and comes from
the Truth (itself). *Neither*^c
did I when any one came

^a Var. συντάξει Ruf. exponere cum interpretationibus suis.

^β Ruf. qui domini mandata memorabant.

^γ Var. παραγινομένας.

^δ Ruf. apostolos.

^ε Ruf. expiscabar. Jer. considerabam.

^ς Nic. (III. 20) ἢ τί Σίμων ἢ Ἰάκωβος.

^a Syr. om. ποτε.

^b Syr. masc.

^c Gressmann (*Th. Ltz.* 1901, p. 644) (*Contrariwise*) not even when.

¹⁶ By the kindness of Prof. C. C. Torrey.

νης ἡ Ματθαῖος ἢ τις ἕτερος τῶν
 20 τοῦ κυρίου μαθητῶν, ἃ τε Ἀρισ-
 τίων καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης
 οἱ τοῦ κυρίου μαθηταὶ λέγουσιν.^η
 οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων τοσοῦ-
 τόν με ὠφελεῖν ὑπελάμβανον ὅσον
 25 τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ με-
 νούσης.^θ

^η Ruf. ceterique discipuli dice-
 bant. Jer. discipuli domini loque-
 bantur. Nic. (II. 46) om.

^θ Jer. add. in suis auctoribus.

along who had been a fol-
 lower of the Elders, *compare*
 the words of the Elders: what
 Andrew said, or what Peter
 said, or what Philip, or what
 Thomas, or what James, or
 what John, or Matthew, or
 any other of the disciples of
 our Lord. Nor what Aristo^d
 or John the Elder^e [].^f For
 I did not think that I could
 so profit from *their*^g books, as
 from the living and abiding
 utterance.

^d Arm. Aristos.

^e Arm. *the elders*; simple addi-
 tion of the plural points in Syr.

^f Syr. om. οἱ τοῦ κυρίου μαθηταὶ
 λέγουσιν.

^g Syr. add. *their*.

The sense given by **S** to the Papias fragment is clear enough. He makes Papias distinguish three classes of teaching: (1) "the commandments of the Lord," "the Truth itself," which when reported by the actual ear-witnesses could be described as a "living and abiding utterance." These are the object of Papias' quest. (2) The second class includes "words of the Elders," oral or written. By "the Elders" **S** understands "the disciples of our Lord" mentioned by name, *and* "Aristo (*sic*) and John the Elder," the designation of the last two by the same title as the Apostles being omitted. To "books" **S** attaches the possessive "*their* books," showing that he is thinking of the Gospels. From the sayings and writings of "the Elders" (*i.e.* Apostles)¹⁷ Papias could profit, but not "*so* profit as from the living and abiding voice." (3) The third class of teaching includes the wonder-tales or "commandments of strangers" current in Papias' vicinity, but which were useless or worse.

¹⁷ Jerome at this point is even less scrupulous than **S**. To make it perfectly clear that "the Elders" are really the men of the first generation, he adds in the last clause "in the person of their authors," *i.e.* the apostolic authors of the Gospels (*viva vox usque hodie in suis auctoribus personans*).

To obtain this sense the Greek text has suffered ; partly by S's intentional reconstruction, partly by accident. The extraordinary rendering, "Neither did I . . . compare the words of the Elders," which excites the wonderment of Zahn and Gutjahr, may be due to simple accident. ΕΙΔΕ has been misread ΟΥΔΕ, probably from illegibility of the first two letters. The rest of the changes are systematic, including the omissions.

Although in vol. xvii of this *Journal* (1898) I had already published previous to the appearance of the Syriac a conjectural emendation of the clause designating Aristion and John the Elder as "disciples of the Lord," pointing out that several references in Irenæus suggest ΟΙ ΤΟΥΤΩ ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙ,¹⁸ and that transcriptional and internal evidence alike support the former reading, I cannot agree with Mommsen, who welcomed S's omission here, as representing the true reading.¹⁹ On the contrary, Corssen²⁰ rightly insists that *some* designation of these unknown men is indispensable to the context. Manifestly it should not be a designation identical with that just employed for the Apostles themselves, but one which marks the distinction imperfectly implied in the contrast of tenses (εἶπε, λέγουσι), and more adequately in the case of the second individual, who might otherwise be confused with the Apostle, by the epithet "the Elder." The distinction should be that of the second generation, as in Lk. 12 Heb. 23. The original *in Papias* was, as I have maintained and still maintain, οἱ τούτων μαθηταί, i.e. "the Elders the disciples of the Apostles," so frequently referred to in Acts, Hegesippus, and authorities dependent on Papias.²¹ But

¹⁸ Edwin A. Abbott in adopting the conjecture (*Enc. Bibl. s.v.* "Gospels," col. 1816, n. 3) improves upon it by using the supra-linear line in the word τούτων. He also cites an instance of the same corruption in Jud. 424. LXX, των υιων B, but A κυ (i.e. κυριου) υιων.

¹⁹ Abbott had previously taken this view (i.e.) on the basis of Arm. "The words 'the disciples of the Lord' can hardly have followed 'Aristion, etc.,' in the text used by Eusebius. . . . This . . . is confirmed by (1) their absence from the Armenian version," etc.

²⁰ *Zts. f. ntl. Wiss.* iii. (1902), p. 244.

²¹ *E.g.* Irenæus, *Her.* V. v. 1 and xxxvi. 2, "The Elders, the disciples of the Apostles." Euseb. παρὰ τῶν ἐκείνους (the Apostles) γνωρίμων.

the corruption is earlier than Eusebius, probably earlier even than Irenæus. In Eusebius' text the phrase had already been assimilated to that of the line preceding, else Eusebius would not have been obliged to rely on grammatical arguments (διαστείλας τὸν λόγον . . . προτάξας αὐτῇ τὸν Ἀριστίωνα) to prove his point. Indeed, the corruption may well be largely responsible for the blundering of Irenæus himself. But **S** in omitting the clause is *not* following a better text of Eusebius, much less is he consulting a text of Papias. He is probably not even sensitive to the "chronological difficulty" which Lightfoot himself admitted to be occasioned by the clause.²² On the contrary, he makes two other changes in harmony with the Irenæan anachronism: he omits *ποτέ* and obliterates the difference of tense (*εἶπε*, *λέγουσι*), the only remaining trace of the chronological distinction. No, **S**'s omission (followed by Arm.) is doubtless occasioned by the manifest incongruity, which produces the same result in one of the two excerpts of Nicephorus Callistus,²³ not to speak of other changes by Rufinus and others²⁴ at the same point. "Aristo" (*sic*) and "John the Elder" could not be regarded as "disciples of the Lord" *in the same sense* as the designation had just been applied to Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, and Matthew. Changes were felt to be imperative. Arm., which simply adds plural points to the Syriac "the Elder," makes a shrewd guess at the real meaning; but the simplest remedy was to drop the unintelligible clause as a repetition. **S** understood very well that Andrew, Peter, Philip, and the rest were designated *μαθηταί* (not *ἀπόστολοι*), because the matter concerned was the transmission of teachings (*μαθήματα*). He knew the first "disciples" included no such names as "Aristion and John the Elder." The clause was patently erroneous; therefore he dropped it along with the *ποτέ* and the *λέγουσιν*. In the extract he does but one further violence to his text; he changes the spelling of the name "Aristion"

²² *Supern. Rel.* p. 150, n.

²³ II. 46. The excerpt III. 20 retains it.

²⁴ Rufinus omits *τοῦ κυρίου*. Four Greek Mss. omit *ol*.

to "Aristo." The form Aristo then becomes current in Armenian texts, being adopted in the Edschmiazin Codex of Conybeare from Moses of Chorene. This is a comparatively harmless, though mistaken identification of the unknown "Aristion" with "Aristo" of Pella, a heathen writer²⁵ quoted by Eusebius a few pages farther on. Moses of Chorene adds to the quotation, while Maximus Confessor, on the basis of a (misunderstood?) passage of Clement, declares Aristion to have been the author of the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus*.²⁶ Gutjahr is probably mistaken in supposing S to have read *συνέκρινον* for *ἀνέκρινον* in the clause, "Neither did I *compare* the words of the Elders." S renders *ἀνέκρινον* in the same way elsewhere, employing the same word (صَحَّحَ) for "verify by comparison (with the Gospels)." He inserts an *αὐτῶν*, as we have seen, after *βιβλίων* in l. 23, and renders *αὐτῶν* in l. 5 as a masculine — pardonable liberties. The rest of his variants have significance only as supporting the preferred reading *παραγομένας* in l. 12.

The net result of S's work on the Papias fragment is then as follows: Papias appears, as in Irenæus, as the immediate ear-witness of more than seven of the Apostles, besides two individuals, one of whom is called "the Elder"; but the words of Elders, even Apostle-Elders, are of quite subordinate value to him. He is not seeking *their* words, but words of the Lord, to which they can bear witness. Needless to say this is not the sense of the Greek. Here the all-important word is the term *πρεσβύτερος*, four times repeated in the paragraph. *Their* words are just what Papias is after. The "commandments delivered by the Lord to the faith" have

²⁵ Perhaps the same as Aristo of Gerasa (30 miles from Pella) referred to as an *ἀστέριος πόλις* by Stephen of Byzantium.

²⁶ As I have shown elsewhere (Hastings, *Dict. of Christ and Gospels*, s.v. "Aristion"), Conybeare's apparent discovery of the authorship of Mk. 16 9-20 turns out to be a mare's nest. Moses of Chorene was understood by the Armenian scribe to have declared that Hadrian made Aristo of Pella the secretary of "Mark" when he appointed him (Marcus) bishop of Jerusalem. Hence he attributes the appendix which he introduces for the first time into Armenian codices to "the Elder Aristo," the *secretary of Mark*.

been already considered with their interpretations. But the interpretations are disputed. As Polycarp had declared at a much earlier date, "the oracles of the Lord" were being perverted by the Antinomians to their own lusts. The heretics denied also "the resurrection and judgment." The books of "John" (the Apostle and revelator) and of "Matthew,"²⁷ representing as they did the apostolic teaching on the two points of doctrinal contention required to be supplemented by "turning to the tradition handed down from the beginning." It is exactly this which Papias undertakes to do. He may even have had the twenty-four books of Basilides' *Exegetica* in mind in adopting his own title. But we shall best get the sense of Papias' response to Polycarp's appeal by reproducing the paragraph from his preface in simple outline. The process is easy, for in spite of adverse criticism the style of the fragment is admirably clear and logical; its structure is perfectly in accord with the best principles of Greek rhetoric. Simply drop the subordinate clauses, and sense and logic force themselves free of the false presuppositions introduced by the Irenæan misdating.

Συγκατατάξω ὅσα ἔμαθον παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν διαβεβαιούμαι ἀλήθειαν.

οὐ γὰρ . . . ἀλλὰ τοῖς τάληθῃ . . .

οὐδὲ . . . ἀλλὰ τοῖς τὰς . . . τῆς ἀληθείας.

εἰ δέ που παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἔλθοι τοὺς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέκρινον λόγους . . .

οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων . . .

ὅσον τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς.

Everything here concerns the traditions of "the Elders" which Papias thinks not unworthy to be subjoined to his interpretations of the Lord's oracles. Hence the emphatic position and reiteration of the word "Elders." He bespeaks for their words higher consideration than such traditions are wont to receive because of the care he had taken in collecting them. This method he then describes in two

²⁷ As already shown, Papias knows John the Apostle as (reputed) author of Revelation. He "used testimonies" from 1 Jn., and therefore may have known the Fourth Gospel. That he considered John its author is improbable. His "Matthew" is certainly ours.

negative clauses and one affirmative: I did not . . . , nor did I . . . , but when a follower of the Elders came along I inquired for the words of the Elders. Finally, he justifies his going beyond the instruction of his own teachers by the superiority of oral tradition thus sifted to books.

Whom Papias meant by "the Elders" we have yet to inquire. All that is apparent thus far is that it is not, as **S** supposes, words of the Lord of which he is here speaking, but "words of the Elders," and that he gives no indication of meaning anything different by the term "Elders" in one part of the passage from what he means in another. True, Eusebius, and Irenæus before him, took "Elders" in l. 15 to equal "disciples of the Lord." Jerome actually adds three words to the text (l. 26) to force this meaning upon it. But the evidence that Abbott justly demands²⁸ that the word was ever so used has yet to be supplied. Even if Irenæus and Eusebius were not misled by the corruption of οἱ τούτων to οἱ τοῦ κυρίου, we have seen that Irenæus was blinded by his own prejudice on this point, and Eusebius was similarly precluded from more than a partial correction. The real distinction which Papias makes is between teachings from "books" and "words of the Elders" who reported the "*living and abiding voice*" of Apostles. The latter he got from chance comers who had been their (the Elders') followers, in particular followers of Aristion and the Elder John. The former he had obtained like others about him from those who had "taught the truth."

But since we are now dealing only with **S** and his evidences of *Tendenz*, let us leave temporarily his distortion of Papias, and see what he makes of the argument of Eusebius which encloses the extract. Here, too, we find the same bias in favor of Eusebius' opponent. The introductory sentence runs thus:

CONTEXT OF EUSEBIUS

Αὐτός γε μὴν ὁ Παππίας κατὰ But he, Papias, *does not*
τὸ προοίμιον τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων *show at the beginning* of his

²⁸ *Enc. Bibl.*, s.v. "Gospels," § 71.

ἀκροατὴν μὲν καὶ αὐτόπτην οὐδα-
μῶς ἑαυτὸν γενέσθαι τῶν ἱερῶν
5 ἀποστόλων ἐμφαίνει, παρεληφέναι
δὲ τὰ τῆς πίστεως παρὰ τῶν
ἐκείνοις γνωρίμων διδάσκει, δι' ὧν
φησιν λέξεων.

words that he had heard from
the holy Apostles, or had seen
them. But that he had re-
ceived *words* of the faith from
men that had known the Apos-
tles he teaches in these words,
saying:

Here follows the extract as above; thereafter:

*Εὐθα καὶ ἐπιστῆσαι ἄξιον δις
καταριθμοῦντι αὐτῷ τὸ Ἰωάννου
ὄνομα, ὧν τὸν μὲν πρότερον Πέτρῳ
καὶ Ἰακώβῳ καὶ Ματθαίῳ καὶ τοῖς
5 λοιποῖς ἀποστόλοις συγκαταλέγει,
σαφῶς δηλῶν τὸν εὐαγγελιστὴν,
τὸν δ' ἕτερον Ἰωάννην, διωστείλας
τὸν λόγον, ἐτέροις παρὰ τὸν τῶν
ἀποστόλων ἀριθμὸν κατατάσσει,
10 προτάξας αὐτοῦ τὸν Ἀριστίωνα,
σαφῶς τε αὐτὸν πρεσβύτερον ὀνο-
μάζει· ὥς καὶ διὰ τούτων ἀποδείκ-
νυσθαι τὴν ἱστορίαν ἀληθῆ τῶν
δύο κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν ὁμωνυμία
15 κεχρησθαι εἰρηκότων, δύο τε ἐν
Ἐφέσῳ γενέσθαι μνήματα καὶ
ἐκάτερον Ἰωάννου ἔτι νῦν λέγε-
σθαι· οἷς καὶ ἀναγκαῖον προσέχειν
τὸν νοῦν, εἰκὸς γὰρ τὸν δεύτερον,
20 εἰ μὴ τις ἐθέλοι τὸν πρῶτον, τὴν
ἐπ' ὀνόματος φερομένην Ἰωάννου
ἀποκάλυψιν ἑωρακέαι. καὶ ὁ νῦν
δὲ ἡμῖν δηλούμενος Παππίας τοὺς
μὲν τῶν ἀποστόλων λόγους παρὰ
25 τῶν αὐτοῖς παρηκολουθηκότων
ὁμολογεῖ παρεληφέναι, Ἀριστίω-
νος δὲ καὶ τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου
Ἰωάννου αὐτήκοον ἑαυτὸν φησι
γενέσθαι.^a ὀνομαστὶ γοῦν^β πολ-
30 λάκις αὐτῶν μνημονεύσας ἐν τοῖς
αὐτοῦ συγγράμμασιν τίθησιν αὐ-
τῶν παραδόσεις.

But here it is requisite for
us to understand that he twice
enumerates the name of John;
the first, he reckons him to-
gether with Peter and James
and Matthew and the rest of
the Apostles, simply pointing
to the Evangelist,^a but the
other John, him he distin-
guishes *by* the word, and *joins*
him in a different way to the
number of the Apostles, and
places Aristo (*sic*) before him;
and him he distinctly calls
“Elder,” so that we show from
this regarding the story that
it is true, of those who said
that there were two in Asia
who had the same name, and
their graves are in Ephesus,
and both to this day are called
John; since it behooves us to
reflect in our mind. For the
Revelation which is called
John’s, if one do not admit
that it is from John the Evan-
gelist, it is probable that it
was manifested to this other
man. But he, this Papias, of
whom we have now given ac-
count, *testifies* that he received
the words of the Apostles from

^a Ruf. om. δε, and αὐτηκοον . . .

^β Ruf. unde et.

γενεσθαι.

^a Lond. Syr.: *the evangelists*.

those who were their followers, *and*^b from Aristo (*sic*) and from the Elder John. *For he said that he had listened to them and* he often mentions them by name, and in his books he records the tradition he received from them.

^b Petersb. Syr., Arm. om.

Now that we have supplied the key to these systematic mistranslations further comment is needless. We only sub-join one further passage as additional proof that the motive is, as stated, to restore to Papias as much as possible of his authority as an ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ αὐτήκοος τῶν ἀποστόλων, in spite of Eusebius. It is the famous passage cited by Eusebius in which Irenæus quotes Papias by name.

Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Παππίας ὁ Ἰωάν-
νου ἀκουστῆς . . . ἐγγράφως ἐπι-
μαρτυρεῖ κτλ.

This Papias also *said*, who
heard (it) from John . . . *and*
in writing he testifies . . .

To Gutjahr this translation is a God-send, for it makes him a present of the most serious obstacle to his theory, the admitted impossibility of grammatically rendering the passage as if it read καὶ ἐγγράφως, instead of καὶ Παππίας. When S translates, not only does Papias become a direct hearer of John, but Irenæus becomes a direct hearer of Papias, and the strength of the traditional succession is doubled. Hallelujah!

It should be by now sufficiently apparent that Irenæus, Eusebius, S, and Jerome all have the same bent as regards the interpretation of Papias. Eusebius is far more of a scholar, and confesses that the vital point of his contention for "another John in Asia" known to Papias is not supported by the text; but on the question of Papias' chronological rank in the succession of apostolic tradition he has the same propensity and the same prejudice as the rest. Instead of dating his work in A.D. 145-160 as does Harnack, on the basis of the recently recovered de Boor frag-

ment,²⁹ which shows Papias dependent on the *Apology* of Quadratus, instead of recognizing in him a contemporary of Justin Martyr, Eusebius is still under the glamour of the description he had adopted from Irenæus in his *Chronology*. Papias was an ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ, a contemporary if not strictly an ἀντήκοος of Apostles, so that those to whom he referred as "the Elders" must be synchronous, if not identical, with "the disciples of the Lord." How much of this idea was due to the textual corruption by which those whom Eusebius assumed to have been Papias' immediate informants were also designated "the disciples of the Lord," we need not pause to estimate. The misconception is certainly present, and a truly dispassionate exegesis of the fragment requires that we take account of the fact. The final step in our inquiry, accordingly, must be an analysis of the extract approached without either of the Eusebian prepossessions as to (a) the closeness of Papias to the Apostles, or (b) his relation to "the Elder John," which, if immediate, would imply that this John also was "in Asia."

We note that Papias "subjoins" Words of the Elders to his "interpretations" in spite of some reason for hesitation (οὐκ ὁκνήσω). They, too, have value as interpreting the "commandments given by the Lord to the faith," although they would not be so esteemed, if the reader did not know how carefully and discriminatingly they had been gathered. For (1) Papias can testify in his own behalf that he had given heed to the twofold warning of Polycarp³⁰ against τὴν ματαιότητα τῶν πολλῶν, as well as τὰς ψευδοδιδασκαλίας. Both these classes of false teaching were already current in

²⁹ Παπίας ὁ εἰρημένος ἱστορήσεν ὡς παραλαβὼν ἀπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων Φιλίππου, οἱ Βαρσαβᾶς ὁ καὶ Ἰούστος, δοκιμαζόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀπίστων, ἰὼν ἐχλιδῆς πίων ἐν ὄνματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀπαθῆς διεφυλάχθη. ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα θαύματα καὶ μάλιστα τὸ κατὰ τὴν μητέρα Μαναΐμου τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστᾶσαν. περὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάντων οἱ ἕως Ἀδριανοῦ ἔζων. Papias seems to have taken Quadratus' statement that some of those who had experienced the miraculous power of Jesus in healing and raising from the dead "lived even to our day" as referring to the day of Hadrian, to whom Quadratus was addressing the *Apology*. At all events, his reference to "the times of Hadrian" implies a date after the close of Hadrian's reign.

³⁰ *Ad. Phil.* vii.; cf. Papias, ll. 6-10.

Papias' youth, but he had kept himself to those who taught the orthodox faith. But (2) he had not confined himself to what these teachers, excellent as they were, could give him, but had sought testimonies of the Apostles themselves. For Papias had also followed the advice of Polycarp in "turning to the tradition handed down from the beginning." But how? Not, of course, by applying directly to the Apostles themselves, as Irenæus and his satellites, ancient and modern, assume. Such a sense for the term "words of the Elders" makes the whole passage ridiculous. Who indeed would "hesitate to subjoin" to his own "interpretations of the Lord's words" the words of Apostles—and apologize for the addition! But the "words of the Elders" are here contrasted not merely with the *ματαιολογία τῶν πολλῶν* and the *ἄλλοτρίαι ἐντολαί* of the Gnostics, but primarily with *τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων*, which his own teachers in Asia had given him, but which "did not profit so much." What, then, does Papias mean by "Words of the Elders"? And whence does he get them? If one could depend upon the emendation ΟΙ ΤΟΥΤῶ ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙ for the second ΟΙ ΤΟΥ ΚΥ ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙ, all would be plain; for we should then understand that "the Elders" in Papias mean "the disciples of the Apostles" (*οἱ ἐκείνων γνώριμοι*), as they are indeed called in several dependent passages.³¹ More particularly he would mean the group in the original mother church and home of the Apostles, to which the author of Luke-Acts and Hegesippus look back as the self-evident authorities in interpreting the Lord's commandments. "Aristion" would be an otherwise unknown member of this Palestinian group, "John the Elder," probably identical with the Jerusalem elder of that name,³² whose death is placed by Epiphanius in 117 A.D.³³

But the emendation is not yet admitted. We must depend on the context.

"The Elder John" is distinguished from the Apostle not merely by the debatable clause and title, but by the tense of the verb. When Papias was making his inquiries the

³¹ See note 21.

³² Euseb. *HE*, IV. v. 3.

³³ *Haer.* lxvi. 20.

Apostles were dead. Many of "the Elders their disciples" were also dead, but Aristion and the Elder John were still alive. For some reason (distance seems to be that implied in *εἰ τις ἔλθοι*) Papias could not interrogate these Elders himself, but followers of theirs who came his way reported to him the teaching they were then still giving. The same chance-comers, or others like them, also reported the sayings of other deceased Elders they themselves had heard. *Such* traditions were to Papias strictly equivalent to teachings of the disciples of the Lord, "Andrew . . . Matthew," as giving the true sense of the Lord's commandments. They could be called "living and abiding," because reported by at least two surviving ear-witnesses. Papias not unreasonably thought them worthy of altogether different consideration from the *ματαιότης* and *ἀλλοτριὰ ἐντολαί* injuriously prevalent in Asia. They even seemed to him of more advantage than the "books" his own local Elders interpreted, for Papias seems to have known no strictly apostolic Gospels for the determination of the real intent of "the oracles of the Lord." What their real value was we have several examples to inform us—the tradition of the woman taken in adultery,⁸⁴ of Jesus' senior age,⁸⁵ of the miraculous fertility of the soil in the messianic age,⁸⁶ of the three degrees in heaven,⁸⁷ etc.

The interpretation here given to the fragment rests primarily upon the principle that it is unjustifiable to give a fundamentally different sense to the most salient word of the paragraph (*πρεσβύτερος*) in four adjacent clauses, or to draw an arbitrary line between the series of imperfects in which the author describes his preparation for his task (*ἐμαθον, ἔχαιρον, ἀνέκρινον, ὑπελάμβανον*).

It is true that in ll. 6–13 Papias refers to his teachers (*διδάσκουσιν*), who need not necessarily be identical with the "followers of the Elders" (*παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις*), but to whom we have still less reason to apply the title "the Elders" in l. 2. It is true that he contrasts

⁸⁴ Euseb. *HE*, III. xxxix. 16.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* V. xxxiii. 3.

⁸⁵ Iren. *Her.* II. xxii. 5.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* V. xxxvi. 1, 2.

their simplicity and orthodoxy with the qualities which attracted the crowd. But this is not for the sake of giving the reader confidence in these unknown men, but in the judgment of Papias himself, whose tastes were unlike the multitude's (*ἑχαιρον*). But why, if Papias' teachers taught him "the truth," "commandments given by the Lord to the faith," does he resort to others? Every reader asks himself the question, and none of those whose hearts are set on the assumption that his teachers were themselves "the Elders" (or even the Apostles!) gives any heed to the answer Papias himself sets down with all explicitness. He questioned travellers who "came his way" *because* only thus could he get "the living and abiding voice" of Apostles, the same which to his mind guaranteed the inerrancy (*οὐδὲν ἡμαρτε*) of Mark. From chance-comers who had been followers of "the Elders" (the same referred to in l. 2) he inquired what (by the Elders' testimony) the Apostles had said, and what the surviving Elders were saying. He thought he could learn more from these well-authenticated "living" words of the Elders than from his own home teachers, because the latter, excellent as they were, could only give him the contents of books (*τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων*).

Who, then, were "the Elders" whose words the chance-comers reported? We have two means of judging. (1) Eusebius tells us that the authorities largely relied on by Papias for this kind of material were the Aristion and John mentioned, the latter of whom is "distinctly called an Elder" to distinguish him from the Apostle of the same name. In the same generation were the daughters of Philip, whose traditions probably also came to Papias at second hand. But these were themselves in Hierapolis, and were not Elders. He does not mean these, nor does he mean Polycarp, whom, if he were not among the teachers who "taught the truth," we should expect to find named. He means a group or class in which neither Polycarp nor the daughters of Philip would naturally be thought of by the reader, but which did include "Aristion and the Elder John." (2) Irenæus preserves for us a number of the traditions in question,

which have indeed a strongly Jewish-Christian and Chiliastic character, but are quite too legendary and artificial to be really derived from Apostles. Their character is that of Jewish midrash, particularly that based on the fanciful interpretation of Gen. 27 28 in the *Apocalypse of Baruch*,⁸⁸ and the equally fanciful combination of Mt. 13 8 with Mt. 20 28 (β text) to support the doctrine of three degrees in the future abode of the righteous—Heaven, Paradise, and “the City” (*i.e.* Jerusalem).

Both indications concur to prove that “the Elders” in this case were no more Apostles than were Papias’ own teachers. The advantage of their words was not their proximity in time to the Apostles, but in place. Their words were brought (ἐάν τις ἔλθοι) from the seat of the “living and abiding voice.” Had the chance-comers themselves then actually heard Apostles? This is distinctly negated by the contrast of tense (τί εἶπεν Ἀνδρέας . . . τί λέγουσιν Ἀριστίων καὶ Ἰωάννης). They could tell what the Elders *were* saying, and what the Apostles *had* said. Like the Gospels which are and always have been valued both for their authors’ own representations, and still more for the “oracles of the Lord” which they embody, were the “words of the Elders” which Papias “subjoined to his own expositions.” These words concerned themselves with “what Andrew or what Peter had said, or what Philip, or what Thomas, or James, or what John, or Matthew (for Papias was concerned to defend the Apocalypse and the first Gospel), or any other of the Lord’s disciples”; and in so far as in at least two cases the testimonies were “living and abiding” their rank was equivalent to that of the Gospel of Mark.

It is true that Papias includes both elements of this oral gospel of the chance-comers—(a) reports of Apostles’ sayings, and (b) teachings of their own immediate followers—under the single phrase “words of the Elders” (ἀνέκρινον τοὺς λόγους τῶν πρεσβυτέρων), which led those of later times,

⁸⁸ *Ap. Bar.* xxix. 5. See Rendel Harris in *Expositor*, 1895, pp. 448–449, and R. H. Charles, *Apoc. of Baruch*, p. 55, note.

ignorant of the date of his writing, to the violence of making *πρεσβυτέρων* in ll. 14–15 mean Apostles, while in the adjacent occurrences it was admitted to mean “disciples of these.” But if the corruption of text in l. 22 had not occurred, this misunderstanding would have been impossible. I have tried to show that even with it the remaining traces of the chronological distinction enable all who will separate the fragment from the prejudiced ideas of its later reporters to obtain the true sense. It was just because the best teachers in Asia could *not* report save from books (*ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων*) “what Andrew, or Peter, or Philip, or Thomas, or James, or John, or Matthew, or any other of the Lord’s disciples had said” that Papias was obliged in his pursuit of “the living and abiding voice” to question “those who came his way.”